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ABSTRACT

This publication examines the establishment of family day care systems, particularly with regard to rural communities. After an introduction outlining the positive aspects of family day care, information is presented on (1) the Child Care Food Program, (2) the organization of training programs for family day care providers and establishment of a toy-lending library, and (3) the setting up of a child care resource and referral service. The problems of providing high quality child care at an affordable price to low-income parents are examined, as is the possibility of training low-income parents to become providers. Finally, family day care support groups and associations are discussed, and a list of resource organizations and publications dealing with family day care is presented. (PCB)

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FAMILY DAY CARE: AN OPTION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

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FAMILY DAY CARE: AN OPTION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

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Madeline Dowling, a project officer representing the United States Department of Health and Human Services, contributed from her rich resources of child care information and contacts.

Amy Reynolds edited the material and designed the publication.

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FOREWORD

Save the Children is an international, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of poor children and their families. It works in 44 foreign countries and the United States, where its programs serve Appalachia, several regions of the South, a number of inner-city communities, Native Americans, and Hispanics in the Southwest.

Save the Children works with local communities to define needs and addresses them through cooperative self-help efforts. Because Save the Children addresses locally defined problems, it is involved in many different activities including housing, food production, sanitary water and irrigation, preventive health, nutrition, small-scale income-generating activities, and programs serving youth and children.

The goal of all Save the Children's efforts is to help families become able to care for their children.

Throughout Save the Children's programs, child care has been identified as a major need of communities. When good child care is available at an affordable rate, parents can lead productive lives and contribute to the economic needs of the family. When good child care is available, children grow socially, emotionally and intellectually; they gain the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Save the Children has been particularly aware that child care is a basic service that must be a part of any community plan because it contributes to the economic well being of the whole community. Good child care not only frees parents to work, but it also creates jobs for people who care for children.

The Southern States Office of Save the Children serves communities in Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia, but it also has a much broader mission: to demonstrate how quality child care can be made available across the country, especially to low-income families.

The Southern States Office operates a number of child care programs that demonstrate ways to provide child care referral to working parents, to pay for child care for low-income parents, and to provide training and other assistance to providers of child care. The Southern States Office is actively involved in sharing its experience with community groups throughout the country through conferences, publications, and individual consultation.

Over the years, the Southern States Office has been especially interested in family day care and has operated a number of programs involving the use of or support to family day care providers. Family day care is a good source of affordable quality child care that deserves greater public attention than it currently receives.

In 1984, Save the Children was funded by the Office of Human Development Services to operate the Family Day Care Replication Project. The project made it possible for the Southern States Office staff to share its expertise about family day care with other Save the Children offices in Arkansas, Arizona, New Mexico, and New York.

The Replication Project focused on demonstrating how family day care can serve as a resource in rural communities. This publication describes a series of strategies that a community group in a rural area might undertake to increase the amount and quality of family day care in their area. A companion publication, The Child Care Food Program and Family Day Care: A How-To Manual, provides an indepth description of how to implement a Child Care Food Program in a rural area.

ONE

FAMILY DAY CARE: AN INTRODUCTION

In communities throughout America there is a growing consciousness about child care. More and more women are entering the work force, particularly women with infants and women who are single parents. The cost of child care is increasing, and parents are concerned about how they can afford good child care. Job training programs for low-income families find that women are reluctant to participate because of a lack of affordable child care.

These pressures and dilemmas are more common in urban areas, but they are growing acute in rural areas, too. The very nature of small towns and rural areas adds some unique dimensions to the problem. Until recently, extended families were an important source of child care in rural areas. Now that pattern is changing. Grandmothers, sisters and cousins are taking jobs outside of the home right alongside their relatives. And those who do stay home quite often expect to be paid when they care for a relative's child. Parents often travel great distances to work, thus complicating the process of getting to and from the child care arrangement. In communities where jobs are scarce, it may be that child care work would be a viable new source of job opportunities for women, but it requires community leadership to capitalize on this opportunity.

Save the Children staff have worked with a range of community groups in rural areas throughout the country and are aware of the growing interest on the part of such groups to do something positive about child care in their communities.

Most often the community group is thinking about starting a day care center. A day care center can be an excellent way to provide high quality child care. However, there are drawbacks to establishing day care centers that may make this approach impractical. Sometimes the problem is the lack of a building that can be renovated to meet day care licensing requirements. Sometimes the children needing care are so widely separated that transporting them to one site would be prohibitive. And sometimes there just aren't enough children needing care to justify the substantial investment involved in opening a center.

For these reasons Save the Children has been advocating for another approach to meeting child care needs in rural areas. It is called family day care. Although day care licensing differs from state to state, family day care is generally defined as the care of six or fewer children in the home of the provider. Family day care offers a number of advantages to families.

Well Suited for Infants and Toddlers

The need for care for children under the age of three is the fastest growing need in day care. Family day care is especially well suited for infants and toddlers, who do well in a small homelike setting with only one new adult to adjust to.

More Flexible Hours of Care

A substantial number of parents work hours other than the traditional 9-to-5, five days a week. For example, in many rural areas, it is advantageous for women who work as waitresses to work over the weekend and be off two days during the week. Other women work second or third shifts in hospitals, textile mills, and other settings. Most workers need child care for long hours since they travel a long distance to work. Many family day care providers will accommodate these schedules, but it is often difficult to find a day care center that can meet the need for such a wide range of hours.

Good for School-Age Care

Family day care is also an ideal setting for school-age children before and after school and during holidays and vacations. Family day care, where providers are likely to take children of varying ages, allows school-age children to be with their siblings and possibly to be in their own neighborhood where they can participate in their regular activities outside the family day care home.

Family Atmosphere

Many parents feel that family day care closely approximates the child's own home setting, and that family day care providers give the kind of care that the parents would if they were home with their children. Parents often choose a provider who has similar moral, cultural and child-rearing values, so that the child learns a consistent set of values.

Parents often mention the "family" atmosphere in a family day care home as a reason for choosing that form of arrangement. They may choose a provider who cares for a mixed age group, so that their child can have the experience of relating to both older and younger children. This family-like quality reflects the "teaching style" used by many providers. For example, a good family day care provider integrates learning experiences into her routine of housekeeping chores, meal preparation, and running errands in the neighborhood.

A COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

Family day care makes sense from a community perspective. For one thing, there are no major start-up costs as there are in establishing a day care center. Family day care homes located in each neighborhood where parents seek child care cuts down on transportation costs and ensures that children in widely scattered areas can be served. The family day care provider, by virtue of being in the area, is a part of the community. Helping her succeed and improve her skills represents a permanent improvement in the quality of child care in the community.

Family Day Care Already Exists

One of the beauties of family day care is that it already exists in many communities, even though it is not visible. When recruiting family day care providers, it is common to find a grandmother or other relative who is caring for a family member and who would be willing to care for one or two more children. Women who have not entered the labor force because they want to be at home with their own children may open their home to several other children to increase the family income and to help meet an important community need.

Economic Advantages in Family Day Care

A special bonus of family day care is that it generates income for the providers. Many women, at least for certain periods in their lives, want to be at home with their own children, or perhaps they have an elderly parent at home. Taking care of children allows them to stay home while adding to the family income. Some women select family day care as a permanent career. Others use it as a springboard to related careers in early childhood development.

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY IN SUPPORTING FAMILY DAY CARE

As community groups become aware of family day care and realize its potential, they want to know how family day care can be used in a systematic way to meet child care needs and how the community can help family day care providers develop high quality programs. This publication describes five broad approaches that have been used successfully in rural and in urban areas.

Each approach involves gathering family day care providers into some kind of system or network, and in most cases each approach emphasizes offering support to family day care providers while at the same time addressing a community concern related to the quantity and quality of child care. Each approach is complicated. It is not possible to give a step-by-step description of how to implement each one, but enough detail has been included to give a reasonable understanding of what is involved in each strategy so that a community group can decide what approach it wants to undertake. Although the approaches are discussed separately, they are interrelated, and the use of one often leads naturally into another.

The final chapter includes information about publications and organizations that can help in the implementation of a specific approach.

TWO

THE CHILD CARE FOOD PROGRAM

The Child Care Food Program (CCFP) was established by the Congress and is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The primary purpose of the CCFP is to ensure that children being cared for in family day care homes (and in nonprofit day care centers) receive nutritionally balanced meals. The CCFP does this by reimbursing the provider a fixed amount of money for the meals served to the children.

There are no income guidelines for the children in care; the food cost is reimbursed regardless of the child's parents' income. In addition, the provider may be reimbursed for meals served her own children if she meets certain income guidelines.

The community group that administers the CCFP must be a nonprofit organization and is called a "sponsor." Sponsors of the CCFP must recruit and train providers, offer nutrition training, make home visits to providers, check records kept by the providers to see that meals meet USDA nutrition standards, figure the amount of reimbursement due providers, and process checks to providers promptly. The sponsor is paid a fee, which is based on the number of providers served each month, to administer the program.

Because the CCFP is a federally supported program, it requires a certain degree of administrative skill to operate. For this reason, community groups in rural areas are sometimes reluctant to become sponsors of the CCFP.

Developing the ability to manage the CCFP properly is an important consideration. However, Save the Children believes that operating a CCFP is the most practical way a community group in a rural area can begin developing a support network for family day care. Even though the administrative responsibility may seem imposing, it is worth the effort to learn about the CCFP and to develop a plan to meet all of the requirements.

There are several reasons why the CCFP is a useful program and a practical place to begin.

A Provider Perspective

From the family day care provider's point of view, the CCFP offers her immediate assistance. Providers who are not participating in the program usually use parent fees to cover the cost of serving food to the children. Because the CCFP pays for the food, the provider can keep more of the parent fee and her standard of living is improved.

Providers discover that the program offers additional benefits they did not anticipate. The reimbursement helps them increase the amount of food they serve children, and the nutrition training ensures that the foods served are nutritionally sound. In fact, many providers report that the quality of meals they serve their own family has improved because of their increased knowledge about nutrition and meal preparation.

The nutrition training program also brings the provider in contact with other providers. Often these are women in the same neighborhood who simply did not know of each others' common interest in children and in the work of being a family day care provider. As soon as a group of family day care providers meet face-to-face, they begin exchanging ideas, and an informal process of self-help emerges.

The CCFP also acts as an incentive for a woman to comply with the day care licensing regulations in the state. In most states, there is some form of licensing designed to protect the health and safety of children of working parents. Some women who offer family day care informally know that a day care licensing law exists, but they are afraid to identify themselves to the licensing agency out of fear that they may not be able to meet licensing standards or that the licensing process is too intrusive or too complicated. There needs to be day care licensing, but there also needs to be incentives to make providers comply with the law. The CCFP requires that the providers meet state licensing or registration requirements. Thus it becomes a powerful economic incentive for providers to go through the licensing process.

A Parent's Perspective

The parents of children in care may be indifferent to the CCFP at first, but they are drawn into the process because they must sign forms verifying their child's enrollment at the family day care home. As soon as they see the improved meals served to their children, they become enthusiastic. Some parents have commented that it helps to know that a community agency now visits their provider and is as interested in the success of her work as they are. Parents recognize that the cost of food is a major expense and that the availability of federal help with this item helps keep the provider's fees down. The CCFP is one of the few federal programs that closes the gap between what it costs to provide good child care and what parents can afford to pay.

A Community Perspective

A group concerned about any aspect of child care in their community should first recognize that the CCFP is an end in itself; that is, improving the nutritional value of meals children receive. However, providers and parents benefit in other ways, too. Establishing a CCFP can be the cornerstone for developing other child care services that are described throughout this publication. The CCFP can also be a part of a community organization's broader objectives, such as job training, community development, and social services.

Having a CCFP lets you start by finding people who are already offering child care in the community and upgrading the quality of the care they offer, rather than trying to start new centers or family day care homes.

At a most basic level, the CCFP is valuable because of the administrative funds. These funds can only be spent on administering the CCFP, but at least it means there can be an office, a telephone, and the kind of continuity that having paid staff brings to a small organization.

HOW THE CHILD CARE FOOD PROGRAM WORKS

The basics of operating a CCFP are described in this chapter. For a more thorough discussion, Save the Children has published a manual, **The Child Care Food Program and Family Day Care: A How-To Manual.** Information about ordering it is included in Appendix A.

Federal, State and Community Partnership

The United States Department of Agriculture is responsible for the CCFP at the national level. The funds are in turn administered by an appointed state agency such as the Department of Education or the Department of Human Resources. The governor or state legislature decides which agency will administer the program. The state agency is responsible for administering the CCFP funds in the state, and for selecting sponsor organizations to serve specific communities. The state agency is also responsible for providing training and technical assistance to community sponsors and for monitoring the performance of sponsors.

Responsibilities of a CCFP Sponsor

An organization applying to the state agency to sponsor a CCFP must develop a management plan outlining how all CCFP regulations will be met. The potential sponsoring organization must:

Demonstrate that it has public or private nonprofit status, or is moving toward nonprofit status.

Have a history of successfully managing funds for public or private programs.

Provide an acceptable and realistic plan for recruiting day care homes to participate in the CCFP.

Submit an acceptable management plan for approval.

Management of a CCFP requires the sponsor to:

Publicize the availability of the CCFP to family day care providers.

Approve family day care homes for participation.

Provide initial and ongoing training about the CCFP regulations to participating providers.

Conduct nutrition education sessions throughout the year for providers as required by the state agency.

Check menus sent in monthly by providers to see that meals meet USDA nutrition standards, and inform providers (usually in writing) if the meals do not meet the standards.

Figure the amount of reimbursement due providers, write and mail checks to providers for each month that the provider sent in menus.

Furnish providers with all forms required for participation.

Make home visits to each provider as required by the regulations, to review provider's food service.

Keep records of all transactions and management of CCFP expenditures for reporting to the state agency.

Help providers understand and meet all USDA and state requirements for participating in the CCFP.

Furnish reporting forms as required by the USDA and the state agency.

Responsibilities of Family Day Care Providers

A family day care provider enrolled in a CCFP can be reimbursed for two meals and one snack per day per child. The provider is reimbursed for actual meals served. As of July 1986, the rate of reimbursement is $1.16 for lunch or dinner; $.592 for breakfast; and $.345 for snacks. These figures are adjusted each July to cover changes in the cost of living.

Providers must agree to meet all the CCFP requirements. These include:

Become licensed or registered by the state day care licensing authority or meet a set of "alternate requirements" set by the USDA.

Enroll children in the CCFP, using a Child Enrollment Form signed by the parents.

Serve meals and snacks that meet the USDA nutritional requirements.

Send sponsor copies of menus and records of the number of children served at each meal.

Participate in nutrition education training as required by the CCFP regulations.

Allow staff of the sponsoring agency to visit the home to review the provider's food service.

ISSUES IN STARTING AND MANAGING A CCFP

Budget

The USDA regulations authorize start-up funds for new sponsors, but some state agencies have decided not to make these funds available. When funds are available, they pay for administrative expenses associated with developing or expanding a CCFP in family day care homes and for initiating program operations. Start-up funds are available for two months' operation of a CCFP.

Payment to sponsors for administering a CCFP is determined by the number of providers who submit a request for reimbursement each month. As of July 1986, the sponsor is reimbursed $51.00 per month for the first 50 providers; $39.00 per month for the 51st to the 201st; $30.00 per month for the 202nd to the 1,002nd; and $27.00 per month for each provider over 1,002.

When a new CCFP is started, it is hard to estimate how many providers will enroll initially or how quickly additional providers will enroll during the year. Administrative funds are based on the number of providers who send in menu and other required forms (and are reimbursed) instead of on the number enrolled. Because of this, some CCFP sponsors earn very little administrative funds in the first few months. If USDA start-up funds are available, they supplement administrative funds received. Where start-up funds are not available, some groups use volunteers or donated funds until enough providers are enrolled to pay actual administrative costs.

Staffing

In a very small community there may be only ten or fifteen family day care providers willing to enroll in the CCFP. In this case, it may not be possible for the CCFP to have a full-time staff person. Several CCFP programs exist which serve a relatively small group of providers. Usually they are operated by an existing nonprofit day care center or social service agency, where one or two staff persons who have other duties work part time to operate the CCFP.

As a general rule of thumb, a community group should not consider having a full-time staff person unless there is potential to enroll at least 50 family day care providers in the CCFP. Even sponsors serving a very large number of providers emphasize the value of using part-time staff who work on specific assignments. As the program grows, the number of part-time staff and the the hours they work can be increased.

The CCFP operated by Save the Children's Southern States Office is a good example of this approach. Several employees work just the first five or six day of each month. This is the time when the family day care providers' claims for reimbursement must be processed.

Save the Children's CCFP also employs area coordinators, who work out of their homes. They recruit and enroll new providers in their designated areas, explain the CCFP, arrange the required training classes, and visit the provider's homes. Area coordinators are paid a fee for completion of specific tasks as opposed to a fixed salary.

Recruiting Providers

Like any new program, the CCFP requires a heavy emphasis on recruitment and publicity in the beginning. The sponsor may find that it has to "sell" the CCFP. One barrier to overcome may be that the potential enrollee has never heard of the program. Some providers don't want to become involved with government programs. They feel that strangers should not be allowed to come into their homes to inspect and approve the home for care of children. Many women are afraid their income taxes will be increased if they accept reimbursement for food.

As the program expands in the community and providers begin to meet each other and learn more about registration, licensing and income taxes, these barriers to enrollment are removed. The information is passed to others by word-of-mouth; eventually sponsors find that people caring for children call to find out about the program.

Recruiting providers for the CCFP is an ongoing task, since enrolled providers will drop out for various reasons, and other women will become family day care providers. Many providers take care of outside children when their own children are young, and then return to the work force when their children enter school.

One way to recruit is to leave printed brochures in day care licensing offices, libraries, laundromats, grocery stores, churches, recreation facilities, etc. The brochure should briefly describe the benefits of the CCFP and the responsibilities of the provider. It should have a "self mailer" tear-off section with the sponsor's address on one side, and, on the other side, a form to be filled out by anyone interested in learning about the program.

Another source is the local newspaper. Check the classified ads for people advertising child care in their homes. Call and explain the CCFP, and mail information. If the person is interested, make an appointment to visit. If he or she is married, you might offer to visit when the spouse is home so that he or she can also hear about the program.

Many other recruitment techniques have been used successfully, including posters placed on bulletin boards, press releases about the program, presentations to local civic and professional groups, and asking enrolled providers to tell other potential and practicing providers about the program. Sponsors need to be creative in their recruitment efforts.

ASSISTING A NEWLY ENROLLED PROVIDER

The CCFP by nature requires accurate record keeping by the providers and by the sponsor. The best way to help providers is to develop a set of forms that meet all of their record-keeping responsibilities and which are relatively easy to complete. In some states, the state agency has designed a set of required forms. In other states CCFP sponsors may develop their own forms. Sample forms are usually available from the state agency, and are also included in the publication, **The Child Care Food Program and Family Day Care: A How-to Manual,** mentioned previously.

The CCFP must be regarded as a highly accountable program. The community group wishing to become a CCFP sponsor must be prepared to develop and maintain very careful procedures for reviewing providers' claims for reimbursement, and for writing checks to the providers. Many existing CCFP sponsors have designed effective systems for processing claims and have been generous in sharing their experience with newly established sponsors.

Even though the CCFP requires accuracy and administrative skills, it is well worth the effort because of the benefits to children, working parents, the providers, and the community. It is not hard to learn how to sponsor a CCFP. The state agency wants sponsors and helps them learn how to administer the program.

THREE

TRAINING AND TOY-LENDING LIBRARY

An effort to organize training for family day care providers is a natural outgrowth of a child care food program or from any other experience that brings a community group interested in child care together with women in the community who offer child care in their homes.

Many family day care providers who began without the help of a community group report that they experienced problems and conflicts with parents before they developed an effective program. These women did not recognize at first that family day care is a small business and that a provider needs to have clear policies for parents as well as a system for keeping financial records and information about the children being served.

People who provide child care have a natural interest in children, are interested in helping children develop well, and want to know more about how to do this. Providers soon realize that caring for other peoples' children is a different challenge from being parents to their own children, and they have many questions about how to handle specific needs of the children in care. With all these forces at work, family day care providers seek training programs that address both the care and development of children and the operation of the program as a business.

Sometimes training is organized by a community agency with a particular interest in job training such as vocational school, community college, or college. Sometimes it is developed by a community group whose primary interest is in helping low-income women improve their financial situation by becoming family day care providers. These are all groups that might lead or lend assistance to an effort providing training to family day care providers in a rural area.

START-UP TRAINING

A well-informed community group can offer vital help during the time a woman is deciding whether to become a family day care provider. The group can organize to meet the provider's needs for information and help her start up successfully.

Answers to Specific Questions

The new provider wants to know:

What age children to care for, and why.

How to advertise her family day care services.

How much income can she expect to earn.

How to schedule her day with the children in care.

How caring for outside children will affect her own family responsibilities.

What is involved in day care licensing.

How to go about obtaining licensing or registration.

What other local laws apply to a family day care business and how to comply.

What kind of insurance is needed.

What affect will offering family day care have on her income tax.

Some providers manage to get satisfactory answers to all these questions on their own, but others make mistakes because they don't know the right questions to ask, or don't know who or where to ask. They also may get misinformation.

Techniques for Providing Start-Up Training

Depending on the resources available, the community group can answer these questions in several ways. Some groups gather information about all these subjects and offer to answer questions on the phone or with written materials. Other programs visit the prospective provider's home to discuss the subjects. An advantage of a home visit is the opportunity to see the space that will be used for child care. Also, the home visit can lead to a discussion of child safety and ways the home can be made safe from accidents.

A great advantage in a start-up session is that providers meet other women who are also just beginning. They hear how other new providers are planning to handle concerns similar to their own, and they share experiences and ideas. It is encouraging to learn that other women share their values about child care. This may lead to continued contact with each other for ongoing support.

Most start-up training sessions are short, but they try to cover a large number of topics. For example, Save the Children's program in Atlanta offers one-day sessions on "How to Start a Family Day Care Home." The sessions are offered several times a year and are open to anyone who wants to attend. Because the sessions are relatively short, the emphasis is on topics that will help potential providers make educated decisions on entering the field, identify what steps they will need to follow in getting started, and the program's benefits.

These sessions usually last about six hours, but many participants have already thought about some of these issues and have good ideas on how they plan to handle them. Often the trainer will ask the group to decide on which topics to spend the most time. The session also includes sample forms as well as written materials which cover each of the topics.

In some communities, the start-up training is divided into a series of topics, with sessions held one or two nights a week over a period of six to eight weeks. For example, the Fairfax County Office for Children in Virginia has developed a course of fourteen sessions of two and a half hours each. This course places a great deal of emphasis on information that helps a provider work with children. Classes are devoted to subjects such as organizing a family day care home, working with parents, social development, emotional development, language, discipline, how children learn, learning activities, first-aid, observation in a family day care home or day care center, and a review of the course.

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDERS

Even though the provider has completed a start-up course and has been keeping children for a while, she will continue to need training, information, and support. Taking care of children is like any other job; it takes time to master the needed skills, and there are always new things to learn.

The provider may have additional questions about business issues, about managing her schedule, or about new activities to do with the children. Providers want to expand the range of skills and techniques that they bring to their jobs.

Training is important for other reasons: it helps to keep the provider connected to the "outside" world. Providers often say they feel isolated because they are at home all day with only children to talk to. Training sessions help to mitigate this major drawback to job satisfaction. In communities where providers have been actively involved in training over a period of years, there is a much greater sense of family day care as a profession. Through these sessons, they discuss common problems, exchange ideas, and offer each other support and advice. Particularly effective providers often become role models for other providers, and an informal pattern of leadership arises. As a result, providers develop a sense of high standards and common purpose that is essential to promoting quality and professionalism in family day care.

WAYS TO PRESENT TRAINING

Designing training for providers who have children in care is a challenge. Most providers care for children nine or ten hours a day, five days a week. Many also care for children in the evenings or on weekends. Creative ways have to be designed to overcome these obstacles. Some are listed below.

Home Visits

Working with the provider individually in her home is an effective but relatively expensive way to train. Groups that take this approach may visit a new provider as often as once or twice a week, or may visit an experienced provider once a month, or even less. During the visit, training is offered in different ways. Sometimes the home visitor demonstrates a learning activity with the children; in this way the home visitor serves as a role model of effective learning techniques. Sometimes the home visitor presents a brief training session to the provider. This can be done at nap time when the children are least likely to need the provider's full attention. Sometimes the visitor will observe the provider and offer suggestions on how to handle a specific situation.

When the home visitor and the provider get to know each other, it is quite common for the provider to have a list of questions she wants to ask when the home visitor returns.

Evening and Weekend Workshops

Even though they require an extra commitment from providers and trainers, workshops held in the evening or on weekends are an option that is most often made available. Evening or weekend workshops allow an opportunity to present information critical to providers. There may be a general session to acquaint providers with news of common interest, such as a change in day care licensing practices, or a new social service program that may be helpful. There may be two or three concurrent workshops where the provider is free to choose the subject she is most interested in, or there may be informal groups of providers where there is no predetermined topic.

Scheduling training when the provider is "off duty" is the only practical way to teach topics such as first-aid, infant CPR, or to offer a series of sessions on such topics as ages and stages

of child development. Providers who decide that family day care is a career will want longer, more indepth training. Some will begin taking college courses in child development and early childhood education, while others will attend a vocational school or college that offers special classes for family day care providers. Some will seek courses offered by community agencies such as the YWCA, the Extension Service, etc.

Many sponsors ask providers to pay a nominal fee to attend training; this helps cover the cost of the sessions.

Newsletters

Almost every community group serving a large number of providers has a newsletter. It is practical because it reaches all the providers, who can then read it at their convenience. The newsletter can convey many different kinds of information; it can announce future training sessions, explain changes in agency policy, describe new programs or services in the community, provide legislative alerts, and answer providers' questions. The greatest concern seems to be to keep a fresh flow of ideas going to the provider concerning her work with children. Most newsletters are brief, produced in an inexpensive format, and are full of recipes, songs, finger plays, child development articles; and ideas for art, science and other learning projects.

Telephone Counseling

Considering the amount of time the provider must be at home, the phone is an important aid to overcoming feelings of isolation and maintaining contact with the outside world. In any kind of training project, there will be many phone calls between the staff or volunteers and family day care providers. Providers will call with questions for the home visitor, or to ask questions about an upcoming training session.

Some groups use the phone for training as well as for giving information. They may set aside certain hours when providers are encouraged to call, and assign staff or volunteers with special expertise to answer the calls. A large California child care resource and referral agency called "Bananas" operates a "warm line" that is available to parents and family day care providers. At different times a nurse, a social worker, or an early childhood specialist is available to answer calls. Other agencies have a prerecorded message on specific training topics.

DETERMINING CONTENT OF TRAINING

While there is always a need to update providers' knowledge about business practices, most ongoing training is devoted to enhancing the providers' understanding of child growth and development. Within this broad topic is an infinite number of subjects that might be covered. Some providers may want indepth training on each stage of child development; others will want to understand the concept of a curriculum as a means of promoting learning. Still others may want training in a specific skill or program area such as art, music, dramatic play, puppets, block play, or activities to develop large and small muscle coordination.

Experienced providers will undoubtedly want to have a voice in determining what is taught. This can be accomplished through a survey of providers (a written needs assessment), through informal discussions during training sessions, or by working with an advisory committee of providers. Many experienced groups have proven that providers are excellent trainers and should be used in the training program.

Training Resources

Sometimes a rural community group is reluctant to develop a training program because of a lack of expertise in child development or other topics. However, the necessary expertise is often available from various government and social agencies. The United States Department of Agriculture County Extension Program is an excellent resource and is available in all counties. County Extension home economists have organized support services for family day care in several states, and extension agents throughout the country are becoming interested in family day care.

Day care licensing workers are good resources, as are day care center staff, health departments, mental health agencies, Head Start, vocational schools, community colleges and universities.

TOY-LENDING LIBRARY

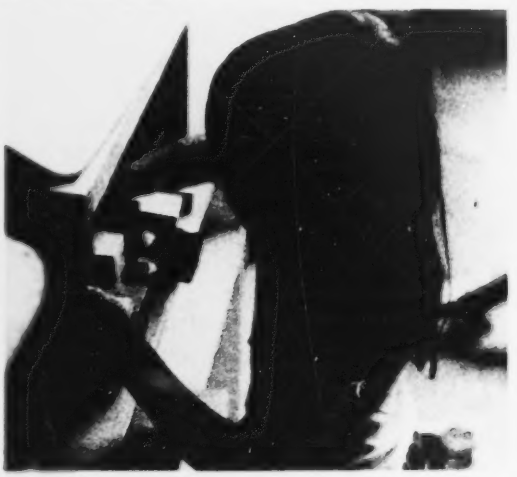
A toy-lending library is another form of assistance that providers welcome. The toy-lending library helps providers learn which toys are appropriate for the age of the child and how to use the toys effectively for child development. Another benefit to the provider is the savings in the cost of toys. A toy-lending library can also be a resource to providers by distributing recycled material and maintaining teacher resources.

All children learn through play and use toys as learning tools. Because children go through developmental stages at different rates, there is an art in knowing when to make the right toy available. Different toys can help the child develop different skills. Toys help the child's emotional development, social skills, physical coordination, intellectual development, sense perception, and encourage creativity.

Toys, when used properly, are also an important means to involve the adult with the child. A toy library provides instruction on how various toys can be used to promote child growth. Adults are encouraged to observe children during play to better understand the child's strengths and limits. Adults are also encouraged to interact with the child in the use of toys so that the child can get maximum benefit from the learning opportunity.

A toy library is a definite economic benefit to family day care providers. When a community agency raises funds to purchase toys and manage the library, the provider is saved considerable expense and yet is still able to make a wide range of toys, puzzles, games and equipment available to the children she serves.

Toy libraries often purchase equipment that the provider may consider too expensive for her individual use, such as a filmstrip projector. Thus the children are exposed to a wider range of materials and toys than the provider could afford.



Organizing and Funding the Toy Library

Toy libraries have been organized by many different kinds of groups. In some areas the library is available to all parents and children, and is operated by a public library. Some libraries are specifically designed to serve the needs of developmentally disabled children. A number of toy libraries are designed exclusively for the use of day care centers or family day care homes.

Family day care providers may have difficulty getting to the library. Many providers like and enjoy all kinds of field trips, while others are judicious about what kinds of trips they are willing to take children on. For this reason, some groups have developed a mobile toy-lending library. Rainbow Fleet in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, operates three buses that regularly visit day care centers and family day care homes. Some programs use vans to carry a large number of items to the provider's home to give her a choice. However, a van is not essential; many programs use an employee or volunteer's car to transport toys. The selection of toys the provider may choose from at any one time is not as great, but different toys are brought each time.

Most rural toy-lending libraries are operated by volunteers. Their tasks include raising funds, staffing the library, and repairing toys. Fund raising may not be easy, but the library concept is good for seeking both large and small donations. Civic clubs, charitable organizations, or merchants might not be willing to donate $100 or $200, but can make small contributions that are important. A toy library is visible and attractive, which appeals to most donors. In several communities, toy libraries benefit from an annual Christmas toy drive. Contributors are assured that some of the toys will be placed in the library so that many children will benefit. Some libraries gain a moderate amount of income by charging a membership fee, but most rely on grants and contributions.

Appendix B of this publication gives suggestions on policies that could be used in operating the toy-lending library, such as selection of toys; classifying toys; storage, display and packaging; repair and sanitizing; and borrowing policies. There are also suggestions in Appendix B on finding and using materials that can be recycled, and how to use the materials in learning experiences.

FOUR

CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL

It is helpful to local leaders to understand the procedures and goals of a child care resource and referral service (CCR&R) as it is emerging in many communities. The description which follows may seem complex for a rural area; however, parents looking for child care need referral services and, to meet this need, efforts can be launched to increase the quantity and quality of child care resources. CCR&R is also a mechanism for effective coordination of all child care in a community and can be an important resource in rural areas.

Most CCR&Rs make referrals to both day care centers and family day care homes, and sometimes to individuals who will do in-home care. Variety is important because parents' choices are respected. However, it is very possible—and effective—to begin a referral service with only family day care since it is the most difficult for parents to find. Day care centers may be added later as need dictates.

DEFINITION OF CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL

CCR&R services have been in existence for about fifteen years. Many community agencies provide information about child care as part of a generalized referral program; however, the concept of CCR&R involves a comprehensive set of services addressing three broad areas:

Assistance to Working Parents.

Resource development to increase the supply and quality of child care.

Community education and coordination of child care.

Currently there are about 200 organizations in the country that can be defined as a community-wide child care resource and referral program. More than fifty of these organizations are in California. Because the concept of CCR&R has proved so effective, the number of communities with a CCR&R program is expected to grow rapidly in the next few years. There are indications that funding may soon become available from the federal government as well as from certain states and employers to help make this possible.

Assistance to Working Parents

Several of the original CCR&R programs were founded by working parents who experienced extreme frustration in finding or maintaining a good child care arrangement.

There are several reasons that parents may not find a satisfactory arrangement. In many communities, there simply are not enough caregivers available to keep up with the increasing need for child care, and the parent may be seeking a form of care that is not readily visible, such as family day care.

The child care arrangement must also satisfy a number of practical concerns of the parent, including hours of operation, a convenient geographic location, and affordable cost. Last but not least, the arrangement must support the healthy development of the child. Parents want a caregiver whose child-rearing values are similar to their own and who demonstrates a genuine emotional commitment to the child. They want an arrangement that is safe, healthy, stable, and which encourages the appropriate social and intellectual growth of the child. When all of these factors are taken into consideration, parents often have a hard time finding the right child care arrangement.

One of the unique contributions of CCR&R is that it looks at child care from a parent consumer point of view. Toward that end, CCR&Rs usually offer several services to parents. These include:

Identification and referral to various forms of care.

Counseling to parents on all aspects of finding and maintaining a good child care arrangement.

Child care consumer education (brochures, newsletter, public media campaign).

Classes for parents on choosing child care and other related topics.

Assistance to investigate and mediate parent's complaints.

Resource Development to Increase the Supply and Quality of Child Care

In the course of identifying existing child care programs and referring parents to them, the CCR&Rs become acutely aware of gaps in service and problems caregivers have in providing good care. CCR&Rs have responded to these problems by developing a series of services to increase the supply of care or to improve the quality of care. CCR&Rs work intensively with parents and caregivers. They contribute to improved communication between these two groups and often bring parents and caregivers together to speak out about a community-wide child care concern.

The kinds of resource development service that a CCR&R can offer include:

Training and technical assistance to start new family day care homes.

Projects to address a specific unmet child care need (infant care, school-age care, care for handicapped children, short-term emergency care, etc.).

Training programs on all aspects of working with young children or management of a family day care home.

Administration of the Child Care Food Program (CCFP).

Operation of a toy-lending library.

Maintenance of a substitute list for family day care providers.

Advertising to help child care providers fill vacancies.

Community Education and Coordination of Child Care

No one organization can solve all the child care problems of a community, but CCR&R can play a vital role in educating community leaders about unmet child care needs. Working cooperatively with other interested organizations, they can meet these needs. CCR&Rs have been especially important in this area because they can provide an assessment of supply and demand for child care based on actual parent requests for care. This information is gathered through systematic analysis of parent requests and is shared widely with individuals representing church, government, industry and civic interests. The CCR&R may also become involved in joint planning, providing technical assistance and community-wide advocacy related to child care. Some specific kinds of activities include:

Publicizing child care needs through research reports, press releases, and newsletters.

Addressing barriers to the provision of care that may result from inappropriate government policy (zoning, building code, fire code, health code, licensing laws, etc.).

Providing technical assistance to employers wanting to study or initiate an employee supported child care program.

Administering public or private funds to help low-income parents pay for child care.

Serving as advocates for the needs of parents and caregivers through participation in community-wide task forces or through active lobbying of state and local officials.

STARTING A CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL SERVICE

In a small community, the referral system can be simple. It may consist of a map on a wall with pins to show where centers and day care homes are located, combined with a set of file cards that describe each center or home. Even so, there are decisions that the community group wishing to start a CCR&R must make, including:

What types of child care arrangements will be included?

What geographic boundaries will be served?

Will referral be done by phone or through office visits?

What relationship will the CCR&R have with the day care licensing agency?

Will the CCR&R need liability insurance?

How will the CCR&R keep its records updated, especially which programs have vacancies?

Many publications are now available describing the development of a CCR&R. See Chapter Seven for a list of some of them.

Enrolling Family Day Care Homes in the CCR&R

Basic information the CCR&R needs to know about each family day care home is hours of operation, ages of children served, location, fees, the kinds of activities offered to each age group, and what current vacancies exist. (See Appendix C for a sample form.) The information must be filed so that it is easily retrieved by a referral counselor. Usually each child care arrangement is identified on a map, and the enrollment form or a summarized version is filed according to geographic area. In some large CCR&Rs the referral process has been computerized, which not only helps to search a large number of possible arrangements, but also makes it easier to summarize data from the parent request.

Handling Parent Requests

There should be a standard form for recording parents requests for child care. (See Appendix C for a sample form). The parent form records the parent's preference of location and other specific issues such as the age of the child or children, and the hours care is needed. Information about any special needs of the child is also recorded. The parent form should also be designed so that data can be summarized for purposes of community-wide needs assessment.

After a request for child care referral has been received, the CCR&R usually tries to refer the parent to several child care arrangements that match their needs. Most CCR&R programs emphasize that they offer referrals, not recommendations; they do not guarantee the quality of the caregivers enrolled in the referral system. CCR&Rs believe strongly in the importance of parental choice in selecting a child care arrangement. They point out that parents know their own child's needs best and are therefore the best people to make the choice.

Counseling Parents About Child Care

Counseling is another important element of the referral process. Child care counselors find that most parents are receptive, interested, and grateful for the chance to discuss choosing a child care arrangement. Usually the counselor will find out what experience the parent has had in selecting child care and how satisfied he or she was with previous arrangements. Information is then offered depending on the parent's needs. The discussion may include an explanation of the day care licensing law, general guidelines for selecting care or suggestions offered on how to negotiate with a caregiver related to a specific concern.

If the parent is interested, the counselor may send a brochure on choosing child care. The parent is always urged to visit and evaluate more than one child care arrangement before making a decision.

There are many other kinds of discussions that may take place requiring counseling skills and specific information. Child care counselors often talk to parents about conflicts between work and family life; emergency situations that require an immediate change in child care plans; the care needs of handicapped children; problems of latch-key children; and concerns of first-time parents making child care decisions.

Parent Complaints About Child Care

A CCR&R must be prepared to receive complaints from parents about a specific child care center or family day care home. Sometimes a parent will call seeking referral and in the course of the discussion reveal that they are removing their child from an existing child care arrangement which is unsafe. On other occasions, a parent who used the referral service to find care may call back several weeks later to describe a serious problem that has come up. They have removed their child, but want to know what the CCR&R can do to protect other parents and children from experiencing the same problem with the caregiver.

Parents may call back after having made an arrangement and say they are basically happy the with caregiver, but want to discuss any policies they are unsure of. They may ask about whether the caregiver's policies are appropriate, or they may want guidance on how to negotiate with the caregiver. Because of all these possibilities, the CCR&R must have policies on how to handle parent complaints.

Gathering Statistics About Supply and Demand for Child Care

The parent request for child care is a rich source of data about the need for child care in the community. To have a real impact, however, the information must be collected systematically and summarized. Deciding what statistics to keep is an important consideration. Save the Children operates a CCR&R in a large metropolitan area (Atlanta), and in a relatively rural community (Carrollton, Georgia). In Save the Children's experience, the most important statistics to record and share with community leaders include:

The number of parents who call each month.

The reason parents need child care (employment, school, job training, seeking work, etc.).

Whether parents want child care near their home or near their work place.

The type of child care preferred.

The ages of the children needing care.

Hours care is needed (full-time, part-time, evenings, weekends, summer, etc.).

Some CCR&Rs do follow-up research with parents who received referrals to find out the result of their search for child care. This information further documents what kinds of child care arrangements are particularly hard to find in the community.

The CCR&R's file about caregivers is another important source of data. The information can be summarized to determine how many total spaces exist for various ages of children, what is the supply in various neighborhoods, what programs have waiting lists, and what programs have scholarships or some other means to assist a low-income parent afford child care.

Staffing the CCR&R

The size of the community is a significant determinant of the number of staff that will be needed and the roles they play. In a small community the CCR&R may be operated on a part-time basis. One approach would be to maintain a referral phone line one or two days a week and have a phone answering machine to take messages at other times. When the phone line is closed, the CCR&R staff person could be involved in training and other resource development activities.

As was suggested in the chapter on the Child Care Food Program, another approach is to add CCR&R duties to an existing nonprofit child care center or social service agency. For example, Save the Children uses this approach in the Carrollton, Georgia program where an office manager is the only person who is in the office at all times. The office manager has been trained to receive calls from parents seeking care. In most cases, she also provides the referral and counseling. If the request is complex, she involves other staff in the referral process as soon as they return to the office. Having designed a good system for receiving calls and enrolling caregivers, Save the Children is able to offer child care referral to ten to twenty parents a month in Carrollton at a relatively modest ongoing cost.

Funding

The concept of CCR&R became well understood and popular about the time that the federal government cut back support to social services in general, including child care. Thus there are very few examples where federal funds have been used to operate a CCR&R program. That prospect may change in the future, however. Through a law passed in 1984 (P.L. 98-558), but only funded in fiscal year 1986, Congress authorized a program called Grants to States for Planning and Development of Dependent Care Programs. This program authorizes relatively small amounts of money to each state to assist in planning, develoment, establishment, expansion, and improvement of dependent care resource and referral.

Seven states (California, New Mexico, Michigan, Maryland, New Jersey, Massachusetts and North Carolina) have appropriated funds to make CCR&R available, and other states are considering this possibility. However, most CCR&R programs that currently exist began with some modest source of local funding. Some have used foundation grants or United Way funds. Some CCR&R programs charge a small fee to parents or request a donation from parents.

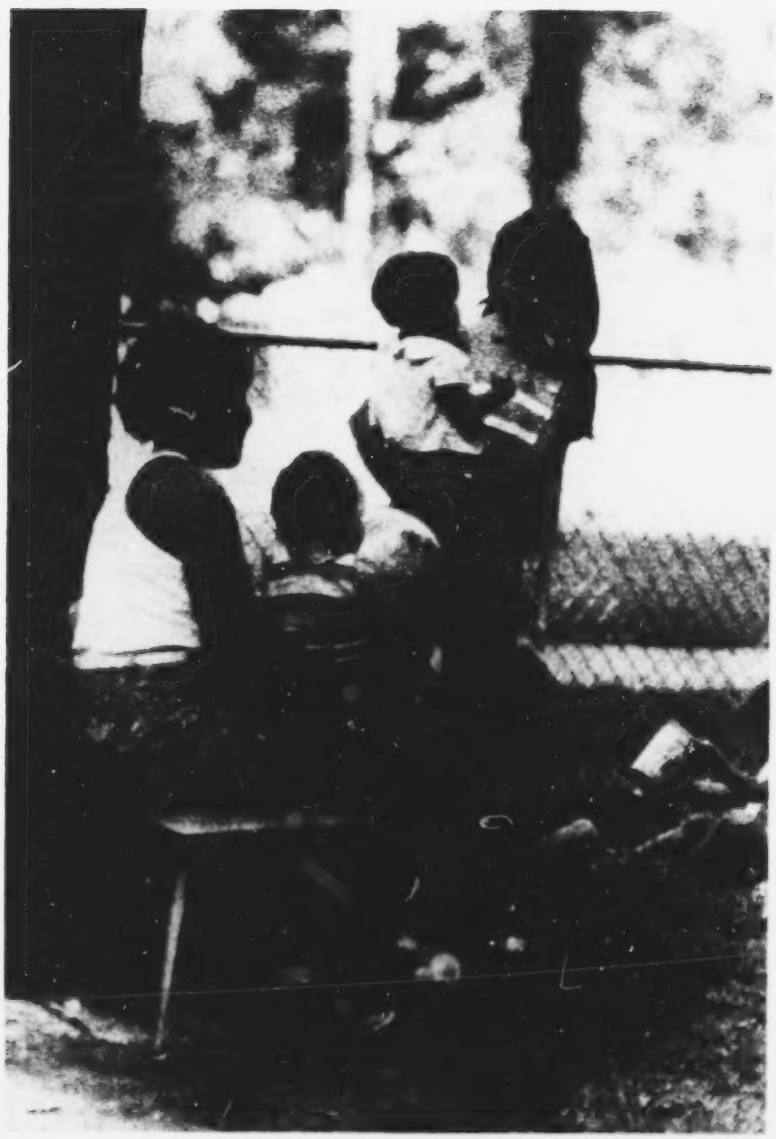
Another possible source of support is contracting with employers to provide referrals for their workers. This is a fairly recent development but looks promising. Employers are beginning to realize that the changing work place requires that they be concerned about the child care needs of their employees. In some cases this leads to the establishment of a child care center at the worksite, but another possibility is to provide child care resource and referral for the employees. The cost of this service is paid by the employer.

In an employer contract, the employee often receives an "enhanced" form of referral involving follow-up assistance to be sure the employee has found a satisfactory arrangement, targeted resource development to increase the supply of child care in neighborhoods where a large number of employees reside, and other kinds of service.

In some urban areas, CCR&Rs have developed contracts with as many as twenty different employers. While this may seem like a strictly urban phenomenon, there are prospects for rural areas and small communities to benefit from this opportunity. For example, in 1984, IBM decided to make CCR&R services available to its employees. To achieve this ambitious objective, IBM provided seed funds to help start a CCR&R in some communities, and in small communities an individual was contracted with to provide referral on an "as needed" basis. There are now other national or multi-site employers who have also decided to provide CCR&R services to their employees.

If this development continues, more and more of the country will be blanketed by employers seeking a CCR&R program to contract with. These employers are specifically interested in the needs of their own workforce, but have supported the idea that child care referral should be a community-wide service.

In summation, many suggestions have been made here, but communities will do well to keep the CCR&R program simple and add new elements as the need arises and as resources can be found.



FIVE

CHILD CARE FOR LOW-INCOME PARENTS

Many community groups in rural areas are interested in helping meet child care needs of low-income parents. In some cases, the group has secured a source of public funds to help pay for child care. In other cases, the group developed a church-sponsored or nonprofit day care center which charges low fees or offers scholarships to low-income parents. Others have tried to help by organizing a network of family day care homes involving special supports to providers and subsidy to parents for the cost of care.

Using family day care to meet the child care needs of low-income parents is a worthwhile strategy, particularly in a rural area. However, there is a real dilemma that planners of such projects must face: how do you simultaneously raise the quality of child care, maintain the cost of care at a price affordable to low-income families, and do so while working toward a better standard of living for the people who offer care?

Community groups have solved this problem to varying degrees. In order to understand this issue, it may help to describe some problems that tend to occur when low-income parents use family day care.

The Need for Affordable Care

For parents who pay for child care, it is the fourth largest household expense after rent, food, and taxes. It is hard to determine how much of the family budget is being spent for child care. Most estimates suggest that parents can probably pay no more than ten percent of their total family income for the care of all their children. Yet most child care arrangements for a single child cost more than the ten percent guideline.

Further evidence of the need for affordable day care comes from a 1982 Census Bureau study which indicates that twenty-six percent of mothers of children under six not now working (1.7 million women), would seek employment if affordable child care were available. The need for affordable child care is particularly acute for single parents and low-income mothers. Forty-five percent of the single mothers surveyed indicated that an unmet need for child care prohibited them from looking for work; thirty-five percent of mothers in families with incomes under $15,000 indicated they would seek employment if affordable care were available.

Complicated Work Schedules

Parents who work for low wages are also likely to have working hours that are non-traditional and, therefore, their need for child care is different from the program hours of most day care centers. They may work evening shifts or weekends; they may begin work early in the morning, or they may work some day and some evening hours. They may work rotating shifts, or experience periodic lay-offs. Thus, they need flexible child care arrangements. They may need a child care provider who is willing to hold a space for a child who does not attend full time.

Transportation Problems

Some low-income parents in rural areas do not own a car and must rely on public transportation or a carpool to get to work. This limits the geographic area in which they can search for child care. Some parents find a caregiver willing to pick up the child, but this adds more cost to the child care arrangement.

Financial Pressures

Many low income parents are just barely on the edge of survival. They have just enough to pay rent, food, utilities and child care, and are often robbing Peter to pay Paul. This lack of stability affects the child care arrangement. They may move from one area to another or change jobs in hopes of finding a better one. The net effect is that some low-income parents change child care arrangements often and are considered unreliable clients by caregivers who need some assurance of stability in order to survive financially.

In other cases, the parents may select a child care arrangement they really can't afford. The parent may fall behind in payments to the caregiver, and the arrangement is ended abruptly either by the caregiver or by the parent, who quietly disappears without paying. The parent may then enroll the child with another unsuspecting child care provider.

A Family Day Care Perspective

Under certain circumstances, family day care can be a relatively inexpensive form of child care. Family day care providers are free to set their own fees and may charge less than day care centers serving the same area. Family day care providers experience some cost savings compared to day care centers because the space they use is less costly.

Providers are often conscious of the needs of the people in their neighborhoods. They charge what they think people can afford, even if that means earning very little for their time. Some providers are quite content knowing that parents need this kind of help. Other providers feel trapped. They would like to earn more and still be of service to low-income families but cannot afford to subsidize the parents. Sometimes the provider feels taken advantage of when she works long hours and does the best she can for the child, and parents are slow in paying or fail to keep up their end of the agreement. The provider may reach a breaking point, and the quality of care may drop or the provider may give up her child care business.

Several kinds of programs have been developed that recognize family day care as a resource to low-income working parents and the conflicts involved. Some programs place greater emphasis on the needs of the parent, while some place emphasis on supporting the work of the provider.

THE AGENCY APPROACH

During the 1960s and 1970s different sources of federal, state, and local funds were available to pay for child care for low-income parents who wanted to begin employment or participate in a job training program. In some cases these were social services funds that also could be used for child care to prevent child abuse or neglect. Government officials charged with spending these funds recognized that parents might prefer family day care. However, they were sometimes reluctant to use it because of concerns about the quality of care in an isolated home where monitoring would be difficult.

In some communities nonprofit organizations believed in family day care and developed a group of homes willing to accept public funds to serve low-income children. They were also willing to follow a set of expectations about how to care for the children. This grouping of family day care providers is most commonly called a "family day care agency." It is now considered a valid way to serve low-income children and children at risk of abuse and neglect.

Family day care agencies build in safeguards, acknowledging that the providers will be supervised, and will be held responsible to offer a safe, healthy and stimulating environment for children. While some providers prefer more independence, there are many providers who welcome the opportunity to be involved in an organization with high standards.

In many areas, family day care agencies were the first community group to recognize and meet the providers' need for training, equipment loans, toy-lending, substitutes, and the Child Care Food Program. These services are still available through family day care agencies. The central mission of the family day care agency is to provide child care for low-income parents. To fulfill this mission, the agency also helps fill the providers' vacancies and assures that they will be paid for serving eligible families.

Providers Are Self-Employed

Most family day care agencies consider the provider self-employed and contract with her to serve specific children. But she may also take other children on a fee basis. This promotes a mix of publicly funded and fee paying children. It also leaves the provider free to set her own hours, to determine what ages of children to serve, and to decide which children to enroll.

A small number of agencies hire the provider and consider her an employee. This means the provider receives fringe benefits and wages, including overtime wages when she cares for children more than forty hours a week. Employment by the agency has advantages for the provider, but it raises the cost of child care. Few agencies have been funded at that level.

Family Day Care Agencies Are a Rich Resource

The most common sources of funds used to operate a family day care agency are federal funds from the Social Services Block Grant. There has been no increase in these funds in the last several years, and consequently few new agencies have been developed. The agencies that remain in operation are a rich source of information about standards and selection practices, home visiting techniques, training, and use of family day care to serve special populations of parents such as teen-age parents of low-income families.

PURCHASE OF CHILD CARE

The agency approach limits the parents to selecting a care arrangement from among the providers approved and supervised by the agency. Some parents welcome this while others feel limited. They may not like the choice of caregivers available, or there may not be a provider convenient to them who is involved in the program. In recent years, a program referred to as "Purchase of Care" has developed. It gives parents a greater choice in selecting a child care arrangement.

Under the Purchase of Care plan, eligible parents contact the Purchase of Care agency and get assistance in choosing a good plan. They are given referrals to a number of family day care homes or day care centers, depending on their preference. Once a provider or center has been selected, the Purchase of Care agency arranges to pay for the care.

In the Purchase of Care plan, the family day care provider meets the state licensing requirements, but usually is not expected to meet a higher set of standards. The Purchase of Care staff visit providers to monitor the quality of care, but not as often as has been common in the agency plan. Training and other kinds of support can be offered to providers in the Purchase of Care plan, but the provider may not be required to attend training or take advantage of any other supports. Because there are fewer supports and because less staff time is involved in helping each home, the cost of operating a Purchase of Care program is typically lower than the cost of operating a family day care agency.

The Influence of Child Care Resource and Referral

Purchase of Care programs tend to develop in communities where a child care resource and referral program is available. The CCR&R's wider knowledge of available child care means that low-income parents really do have choices. The Purchase of Care program supports these choices.

The CCR&R also stresses helping parents become effective consumers of child care. In a community where low-income parents receive counseling about choosing and maintaining a child care arrangement, they should be able to choose wisely from among the available caregivers. The emphasis on consumer education also looks forward to the time when the parents' income increases and their eligibility for public funds ends. The Purchase of Care approach makes it possible for the parent to keep the same caregiver after eligibility for public funds ends and the parent accepts full responsibility to pay the fee.

Save the Children's Purchase of Care Program

A number of Purchase of Care programs have developed using funds from the Jobs Training Partnership Act (JTPA). This federal law helps low-income individuals get job training and to enter employment.

A portion of the funds from the JTPA can be used to pay the child care expenses of parents during the time they are in training and for a short period of time after they enter employment. Save the Children, Southern States Office, developed a Purchase of Care program in Metropolitan Atlanta and contracts with two Private Industry Councils that are responsible for administration of the JTPA funds.

In Save the Children's Purchase of Care plan, parents contact Save the Children as soon as they know they are eligible for JTPA training. The parent is then given counseling and referrals. The parent calls back after visiting several family day care homes or centers and has made a selection. Save the Children then contacts the child care program the parent selected and arranges to pay for the care.

To keep within budget limits, Save the Children's Purchase of Care plan can only pay up to a certain amount per week per child. If the parent selects a child care arrangement costing more than that amount, the parent must pay the extra cost.

A family day care provider who agrees to serve a child under the Purchase of Care program is asked to sign two agreements. One is a general agreement describing her responsibilities and Save the Children's responsibilities; the other is an agreement relating to a specific child and stating the exact fee and length of time the child will be cared for. Family day care providers can bill every two weeks.

Save the Children has also developed a contract to serve an employer using the Purchase of Care plan. The employer was interested in providing child care referral and was also willing to pay twenty-five percent of each employee's child care costs. Save the Children contracts with the employer for child care referral and to administer the funds used to pay for child care. On a national basis, there is a growing interest in this approach, and other employers are expected to contract for this service in the future.

TRAINING LOW-INCOME WOMEN TO BECOME FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDERS

A third approach is to train low-income women to become family day care providers. It has been used by groups who view family day care as a viable job opportunity for welfare recipients or other low-income women. The strategy increases the supply of child care in the community and directly benefits other low-income working parents.

Save the Children has operated several training programs of this nature in urban and rural areas, and on an Indian reservation, making it possible for welfare recipients and other low-income women to become successful family day care providers. However, Save the Children always cautions potential participants that the income from serving six or fewer children must be considered as supplemental income and not as a sole source of support.

A project of this nature must be designed carefully to select participants for whom family day care is a realistic option. A two-parent household where the spouse contributes to the family income is a good prospect. A single woman with an additional source of support (such as a widow receiving Social Security) is a prospect. Women receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) can potentially become family day care providers, but the federal and state incentives to this person are not always good. In states that are experimenting with promoting the "employability" of AFDC recipients, providing family day care may be a good option, particularly when AFDC benefits and eligibility for Medicare are reduced in a very gradual way.

Helping The Provider Get Started

The principal activity of a training project to help low-income women become family day care providers is, of course, training. Important issues in the content and format of training have already been described in Chapter Three. It is important to note, however, that JTPA funds are currently being used in several communities to pay for training programs that teach low-income women to become family day care providers. In addition to the actual training, these programs make other supports available to help low-income women begin taking care of children. Making the Child Care Food Program (CCFP) available is always emphasized. Other activities are designed to save the provider money while being sure the program she offers children is safe and of adequate quality. A few are listed below:

Help in Getting Equipment and Supplies

A beginning provider may not have money to buy needed supplies and equipment. While the amount needed may not be large, often she is reluctant to spend much money until she has children enrolled or until she is sure she will like operating a family day care home.

Providers need to have an adequate number of books, games, puzzles, art supplies, outdoor riding toys, etc. for the number of children they plan to keep. There should be a first-aid kit, smoke detectors, and fire extinguishers. Providers who serve infant and toddlers often need to purchase one or more cribs, car seats, potty chairs, and other equipment needed for infants.

The training project can assist providers in getting the necessary supplies and equipment. In some programs, the provider is given a start-up kit. It includes first-aid supplies and materials to be used in child development activities (newsprint, construction paper, crayons, glue, sample learning activities, printed material about family day care, etc.). If the project cannot afford to give these materials away, they can still be of help by purchasing the material in quantity and selling it to providers for what they paid for it. This will be especially helpful in a rural area where it may be hard to find a good source of child development supplies.

Some training projects have arranged an equipment loan program for providers who need the larger and more expensive kinds of equipment such as cribs, diapering tables, and car seats. The provider borrows the equipment on a temporary basis. For example, a crib could be loaned for three to six months until the provider feels she is established enough to purchase her own.

In some programs the equipment is loaned to the provider for as long as she keeps children, or as long as she takes care of infants and toddlers.' The project can also be helpful by finding sources of less expensive equipment. For example, local stores may be willing to offer a discount to providers involved in the project. Another alternative is to get volunteers or providers who like to shop yard sales and who are willing to purchase on order, to stockpile a supply of equipment for infants.

Assistance with Home Repair or Renovation

Sometimes a provider must make repairs or renovations to her home in order to meet licensing standards. Again, the provider may be worried about spending a significant sum of money before she is sure that parents will use her services and that she will continue to like taking care of children.

The kind of repairs that may be necessary usually relate to child safety. They may include the repair of broken steps or railings, proper ventilation of gas heaters, placing protective barriers in front of coal- or wood-burning stoves, or fencing a part of the yard. In some cases, the provider may need to enlarge her home slightly to serve the number of children she desires to serve.

Several training projects have solved these problems with a "revolving loan fund." The provider must apply and be approved for a loan from the fund. The loan may be interest-free, or a modest interest charge may be added. Most groups who help providers with home repair or renovation emphasize that this is a loan, not an outright grant. They believe that providers who are helped to succeed in business should be able to budget to pay back a loan. As the loan is repaid, another new provider can be helped with the same funds. Another approach to the home repair problem is to find volunteers to furnish labor. The provider would be expected to pay for the cost of materials.

Community groups with an interest in helping low-income parents find affordable child care, or helping them become providers, find creative ways to accomplish their goals. The result is more and better child care for the people of the community, and new job and career opportunities for low-income or unemployed people.

SIX

FAMILY DAY CARE SUPPORT GROUPS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Much of the discussion about family day care concentrates on what the community can do for providers. But it should be recognized that family day care providers are capable of doing many things for themselves. The experienced provider has a great deal of ability and leadership capacity. As a self-employed person, she gains the initiative to make her own decisions. She can handle business matters and offer a service responsive to many different needs of children and parents. When providers and community groups interact regularly, the time comes when providers choose to take on certain responsibilities. This is a natural and desirable evolution. It should not be resisted, and in some respects cannot be hurried. But there are some lessons to be learned from the experiences of other communities that may facilitate the process.

Neighborhood support groups and family day care associations are two kinds of provider-led activities that have developed in some communities. The goals of both efforts are similar, but there are significant differences in size, degree of formality, and range of activities offered.

Support groups and associations have goals of increasing communication among providers, increasing provider self-esteem, and encouraging a professional attitude about the task of caring for other people's children. An association tends

to extend these concepts further through public advocacy for family day care and sometimes by offering the kinds of services described in this publication.

NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORT GROUPS

A neighborhood support group is a small, informal group of providers who usually live near each other. Some of these groups are in contact only by phone, while others arrange to get together either while the children are in care or after the work day is over. The providers help each other in many ways; they discuss problems a provider is having with a particular child or parent; two or three providers may arrange to take the children on joint field trips; they arrange to substitute for each other so that a provider can keep a medical appointment or take a short vacation.

Support groups tend to operate as informal referral programs. A provider who is fully enrolled may refer parents who call her to another provider who has a vacancy.

In some cases, support groups have developed a kind of "play group" program, where two or three providers meet once a week in a provider's home and bring the children with them. The children are introduced to new social relationships and the experience of being in a larger group.

Several providers report looking in their immediate neighborhood and not finding other providers. As an alternative, they contacted women who have chosen to be at home with their preschool children. The providers and mothers have similar interests: communication with other adults, information about how to handle situations with their own children, and for a play group for their children. The providers developed a support group by including these women. A community support group can enhance the process by holding some training sessions in the neighborhood, perhaps in the home of a provider. When the providers get together, they exchange addresses and phone numbers, as well as suggestions about ways they can cooperate to help each other.

FAMILY DAY CARE ASSOCIATIONS

A family day care association is a more formal group, representing providers in a community, a city, or a county. Most associations are incorporated and tax-exempt. They have membership dues and elected officers. In some areas of the country, the association concept is very popular, and there are statewide associations as well as local ones. Currently there are about 130 community or state associations in the country.

Many associations begin at a time of crisis. There may be a change in licensing, zoning, fire code, or payment policies of a public agency that providers consider unsatisfactory, and they convene to express their concerns. Providers may not always see eye-to-eye with the public agencies or other community groups that are available to help them. However, advocating for one's own point of view is a natural growth step and should be welcomed and respected. When providers get together as a group, they have a stronger voice in influencing matters that affect them.

Providers who form an association are aware of the need for public education to interpret family day care to parents, to human service agencies, and to the community at large. In order to establish a positive image for family day care, associations find and help new providers succeed and encourage better practices among existing providers. Some associations use written material or newspaper ads to describe the advantages of family day care.

Family day care associations offer many different kinds of membership services, including most of the supports described in this publication. Some associations have full-time, paid staff

and operate a Child Care Food Program (CCFP), training, and a toy library. There are, however, limits to what an association can achieve. Association leaders find that it is a strain to be with children all day and then devote additional time as an officer or committee member in the association. For these and other reasons, attendance at association meetings is sometimes very low, and associations often follow a policy of making minimal demands on members' time. Despite these limitations, forming an association should be the goal of the community support group, because the benefits are worthwhile.

It may be difficult for a community group to find a source of ongoing funding for the support program they want to make available. When permanent funding is not likely, sometimes a community group can get a time-limited grant or funds for a demonstration project. Out of such short-term projects can come the basis of an association. When the funding ends, there is a possibility that the work of the project—training sessions, a toy-lending library, etc.—can continue through voluntary work of the family day care association.

SEVEN

FAMILY DAY CARE RESOURCES

This publication surveys five ways a community group in a rural area can offer assistance to family day care or can use family day care to address a child care concern. The purpose here is to present enough information to prove the value of each approach and to give broad guidelines on what is involved in each approach. However, once a project is selected many questions about implementation are likely to arise. Fortunately there are many publications and resource organizations that have knowledge and interest in family day care. Some of these resources are described below.

The Child Care Food Program (CCFP)

Several national agencies advocate for increased availability of the Child Care Food Program. They encourage communities to begin CCFPs, and they have been particularly helpful in testifying before Congress to ensure that the CCFP remains a strong nationwide program. These groups include:

The Food Research and Action Council
1319 F Street, N.W., Suite 500
Washington, D.C.

The Children's Defense Fund
122 C Street
Washington, D.C. 20001

The Children's Foundation
815 15th Street, Suite 928
Washington, D.C. 20005

The Child Care Food Program's Sponsor Forum is an association of sponsor organizations. The Forum advocates for the CCFP and provides information on how to manage a CCFP.

CCFP Sponsor's Forum
c/o Save the Children
1340 Spring Street, N.W., Suite 200
Atlanta, Georgia 30309

Child Care Resource and Referral

The California Child Care Resource and Referral Network in San Francisco is a coordinating agency serving all of the CCR&R agencies in California. It encourages the development of CCR&R agencies in other parts of the country. The network has a publication, Resource and Referral Technical Assistance Manual, which gives a thorough description of how to develop a CCR&R program. Chapters are devoted to developing an organizational base, setting up an office, developing and maintaining the referral file, developing an intake and follow-up system, and more. There are examples of forms and publicity material.

Another publication available form the network, National CCR&R Directory, lists all of the known communitywide CCR&R agencies.

California Child Care Resource and Referral Network
809 Lincoln Way
San Francisco, California 94122

Wheelock College is also interested in CCR&R and offers a week-long course in the summer on developing a CCR&R.

Wheelock College
200 The Riverway
Boston, Massachusetts 02215

The National Child Care Resource and Referral Association has recently been established.

National Child Care Resource and Referral Association
c/o Tutti Sherlock
2116 Campus Drive, S.E.
Rochester, Minnesota 55904

Bananas, a CCR&R in California, has a publication, Building a Special Needs Component Into Your Child Care Resource and Referral Services, which describes the role of the CCR&R in helping parents of children with special needs find care. It also gives information to caregivers on how to work with children with special needs.

Bananas
Child Care Information and Referral and Parent Support
6501 Telegraph Avenue
Oakland, California 94609

Training and Family Day Care Providers' Resources

The Home Based Training Resource Handbook, edited by Debra Fish, is an instructor's guide to home-based training for caregivers. It has ten units, including instructions for trainers, reading materials for caregivers, learning activities, and discussion questions. Write:

Resources for Child Caring
Toys 'N Things Press
906 North Dale Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55103

The Family Day Care Education Series, developed by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, includes twelve packets, a trainer's manual, and a family day care independent study course. Available from Resources for Child Caring (see above).

The Calendar Keeper 1987: A Record-Keeping System for Child Care, is a calendar with a variety of activity suggestions from providers throughout the United States. However, its most important use is as a simple system of record-keeping. There are records and charts for daily attendance, parent fees, tax deductible business expenses, emergency phone numbers, worksheets for income, and a simple year-end tax worksheet for income and expenses incurred over the year. It is available from Resources for Child Caring (see above).

Sharing in the Caring: Family Day Care Parent-Provider Agreement Packet, includes ideas on how to establish positive child care relationships with parents, a brochure explaining to parents how to help their child adjust to family day care, and a two-part agreement form to be filled in and signed by the provider and the parent. It is also available from Resources for Child Caring (see above).

Two other publications of Resources for Child Caring are Basic Guide to Record-Keeping and Taxes and Annual Update for Preparing Federal Tax Returns. The Basic Guide is a year-round reference to all basic tax and record-keeping requirements. Because Congress frequently passes tax legislation that affects family day care providers, the Annual Update is published each January. Providers only need to purchase the Basic Guide once, but would need to obtain the Annual Update each year.

The Cooperative Extension Service has a packet of twelve pamphlets on family day care, entitled Family Day Care Exchange Series. Available from:

Publications Distribution Center
Printing and Publication Building
Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa 50001

Family Day Care Classroom Training Guide, by Bonnie Arnold, includes a description of fourteen 2-1/2-hour classes for providers. There is information about the role of the trainer and many suggestions for small group activities to use during training. Available from:

Fairfax County Office for Children
11212 Waples Mill Road
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Caring for Other Peoples' Children: A Complete Guide to Family Day Care, by Frances Kemper Alston, is available from:

Francis Kemper Alston
Day Care Council of New York, Inc.
22 West 38th Street
New York, New York 10018

Home Centered Care, by Ronda Garcia, includes information on starting a family day care home and information on child development theory. The material is presented in an easy-to-read format and includes many drawings and photographs. Available from:

The Children's Council of San Francisco
3896 24th Street
San Francisco, California 94114

The Child Development Associate Assessment (CDA) for Family Day Care is a set of national standards of competency and a system to help providers achieve those standards through training and assessment. The competencies are organized around six goals and thirteen functional areas. There has been considerable research and testing of these competencies. For a copy of the standards as well as a complete explanation of how the CDA for family day care works, contact:

Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition
1341 G Street, N.W., Suite 802
Washington, D.C. 20005.

Toy-Lending Library

The U.S.A. Toy Library Association is a national membership organization providing assistance to existing toy libraries and encouraging the development of additional libraries. Membership services include a newsletter, special publications, a directory of toy libraries, and an annual conference. Contact:

U.S.A. Toy Library Association
1800 Pickwick Avenue
Glenview, Illinois 60025

The Toy Library: How-To Handbook, describes starting a library, including organizing the staff, toy selection, storage, classification, filing, and other issues. Available from Resources for Child Caring (see address listed previously).

Toy Libraries: How to Start a Toy Library in Your Community, written for groups in Canada, contains information on toy safety and where to start a library. It is available from:

Canadian Association of Toy Libraries
50 Quebec Avenue, Suite 1207
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6P 4B4

Child Care for Low-Income Parents

Several family day care agencies publish newsletters or descriptions of specific activities. Among the agencies that have been generous in sharing their experiences are:

Louise Child Care Center
330 S. Aiken Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15232

Family Day Care Services
380 Sherbourne Street
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4X 1K2

Project Playpen
4140 49th Street, North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33709

Associated Day Care Services
710 Jackson Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19148

Child Care Coordinating and Referral Service
408 North First Street
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

Family Day Care Support Groups and Associations

The Children's Foundation operates a clearinghouse on information about day care and has been active in encouraging the development of associations. (See address listed previously).

The National Association for Family Day Care is a national membership organization including associations and individual members. Write:

National Association for Family Day Care
c/o Sandra Gellert
5135 Gramercy Drive
Clifton Heights, Pennsylvania 19018

The Iowa Family Child Care Association and the Colorado Association of Family Day Care have written manuals on how to start an association. Write:

Iowa Family Child Care Association
c/o Phyllis Goody
700 43rd Street, N.W.
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402

Colorado Association of Family Day Care
P.O. Box 594
Wheat Ridge, Colorado 80033

APPENDIX A

Publications of Save the Children, Southern States Office

Family Day Care Series

Save the Children has experience using family day care and providing support to family day care in a number of communities. From the beginning, Save the Children has helped communities learn about family day care through individual consultation, conferences, and publications.

Save the Children sponsors an annual Family Day Care Technical Assistance Conference, which brings family day care providers and support groups throughout the nation together for an exchange of information.

For information about the conference and about the following publications, write to **Save the Children, Southern States Office, 1340 Spring Street, N.W., Suite 200, Atlanta, Georgia 30309.**

The Child Care Food Program and Family Day Care: A How-To Manual is a detailed explanation of how to start a CCFP. Chapters cover requirements, budgeting, staffing, enrolling providers, home monitoring visits, nutrition education, procedures for reimbursing providers, and audits.

Family Day Care Training and Publicity: Audiovisual Resources is a list compiled in 1983 which identifies videotapes, filmstrips, and slide presentations that train family day care providers or publicize family day care as a positive career option. Over fifty items are listed.

Establishing a Family Day Care Agency describes eight agencies that vary in sponsorship, funding sources, administrative design, and support services offered to providers. This publication was written in 1977; some information is outdated but it still has many helpful ideas.

Family Day Care as a Child Protection Service explores the trend of child protection agencies to use family day care as a resource for children in danger of abuse or neglect.

Other Save the Children publications deal with child care for school-age children and day care administration. They are listed below.

School-Age Child Care Series

Counseling Parents About School-Age Child Care: The Role of the Referral Service

School-Age Child Care: A Guide for Working Parents

School-Age Child Care: Strategies for Community Change

Day Care Administration Series

Day Care Personnel Management

The Effective Day Care Director: Tips on Setting Priorities and Saving Time

Day Care Financial Management: Considerations in Starting a For-Profit or Not-for-Profit Program

Time Management for Day Care Directors

Legal and Program Issues Related to Child Custody and Late Parents

Evaluating Children's Progress: A Rating Scale for Children in Day Care

APPENDIX B

SUGGESTIONS FOR POLICIES OF A TOY-LENDING LIBRARY

Selection of Toys

It is important to have toys that are safe, fun, sturdy, reasonable in price, washable (can be cleaned), and that contribute to child learning and development. Each of these characteristics should be considered before purchasing a toy. Publications are available to guide the selection of toys, and these should be used to develop policies on selection.

Classifying Toys

A system to classify toys or catalogue toys is necessary to keep track of which toys are in and which are out of the library; to maintain records on toys that are damaged, lost, or with pieces missing. Most important, the classification system can be used to guide borrowers in choosing toys that are appropriate to a particular age child or to point out different uses of a toy and the skills the toy is designed to enhance.

Storage, Display, and Packaging of Toys

Some of the shelves in the library should be wide enough to accommodate large toys. If children visit the library regularly, it may be best to have toys with many parts on shelves out of reach of the children. The best place to use this kind of toy is at the provider's home. Consideration should also be given to repackaging some toys. The cardboard boxes most toys come in will not last if the toy is borrowed frequently. Plastic boxes are available for this purpose.

Borrowing Policies

Many policies used by a book library are useful in operating a toy library. There need to be policies related to checking a toy in and out, maximum number of toys to be borrowed, length of time the toy can be checked out, and fees for late return or a lost or damaged toy.

Sanitizing and Repairing Toys

Many library staff sanitize the toys after each use. They wash them in a mild disinfectant that would not be harmful if it came into contact with a child's mouth.

It is normal to expect that some toys will be damaged. The sturdier the toy, the more likely it can be repaired and returned to use. Toy repair is often a good volunteer activity that can be done at home or at the library. Many toy companies publish information on how spare parts may be ordered. This information should be kept on file.

Recycling Service

Well designed, well constructed toys are important for an effective family day care home, but are not the only objects that can be used to promote growth and learning. Many everyday objects found around the house or which are considered consumable (and are discarded by individuals, institutions and business) can be used by a family day care provider to offer artistic and learning experiences for children.

Materials that can be recycled for use in teaching activities include milk cartons, oatmeal boxes, ribbons, scrap cloth, jar lids, shoe boxes, magazines, cardboard boxes, tin cans, thread spools, aluminum pie plates. The list is virtually limitless.

Businesses are great sources of recyclable materials. Paint and wallpaper stores have paint chips and discontinued wallpaper books. Fabric and craft stores have fabric remnants, cardboard forms, and other scrap materials. The newspaper may have ends from rolls of newsprint. Frame shops have mat board scraps. Ice cream stores have empty ice cream containers; hardware and lumber stores have scrap lumber; and appliance stores have large appliance boxes.

An individual family day care provider may use the consumable items from her home, and can ask the children's parents to contribute theirs, but she might have difficulty in visiting and collecting materials from the many community institutions and businesses that could be helpful. In some cases, the business may have a large quantity of recyclable materials to donate, but doesn't want to be bothered by contacts from many different providers. Out of these circumstances came the idea of a recycling service.

A toy-lending library with a recycling service contacts various businesses to determine whether they have materials that could be useful and would be willing to donate, and furnishes a list of items that are useful. Library staff are usually responsible for picking up the material on a regular basis and will need space to store all that "beautiful junk."

A successful recycling service has many kinds of materials available, and it is important that a system of storing large and small objects be devised. Most recycling programs charge a small fee to cover the cost of picking up the materials.

Teacher Resources

The toy-lending library can also offer information and examples of how to use the materials in learning experiences for the children. For example, in an area with wood scraps and blocks, there would be several examples of projects using the materials, completed by children. There would be woodworking tools and written information about how to use the tools. Providers would be encouraged to use the tools in art projects with the children. Volunteers would offer periodic classes in using the materials. Written handouts, perhaps including simple sketches of several toys, games, and learning activities using wood might also be given to providers.

Toy-lending libraries are not only beneficial to children and providers, but they are also relatively easy to operate, are a lot of fun for everyone involved, and are a source of pride to the community that helps create and support them.

APPENDIX C

Sample Forms

Sample Child Care Resource and Referral Service form for recording information from parents

CHILD CARE SOLUTIONS - PARENT INTAKE

Initials of Counselor _____

Month ___ Year ____ Day of Mnth.___

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

County: _____ Zip _____

Phone: Home: _____ Work _____

Nearest Major Intersection: _____

_____

_____

Route to Work: _____

_____

_____

Prefers Care Near: _____

_____

Employer's Name & Location: _____

_____

When Care Needed: Immediate _____

Starting Date: _____

Home Code (County)

1. Clayton	5. Fulton
2. Cobb	6. Gwinnette
3. DeKalb	7. Other
4. Douglas	8. Not Given

(Form continued next page)

No. of Children Needing Care

1. One	3. Three
2. Two	4. Four +

Child No. 1 _____

Age

1. 0-12 mos.	3. 3-4 yrs 11 mo
2. 1-2 yrs, 11 mo	4. 5-5 yrs 11 mo
	5. 6 yrs. +

Time Needed

1. Full	3. B/AFS
2. Part	4. Summer

Comment on Hours: _____

_____

_____

Days/Nights

1. Days Only
2. Nights Only
3. Both

Child #2 _____
Age _____
Time _____
Day/Eve _____
Day/Wk _____
Pref. _____
Sp. Need _____

Days of Week

1. Weekdays Only
2. Weekends Only
3. Both

Preference

1. Fam. Day Care
2. Center
3. In-Home
4. Other
5. Multiple Optns

Child #3 _____
Age _____
Time _____
Day/Eve _____
Day/Wk _____
Pref. _____
Sp. Need _____

Special Needs

1. No
2. Yes

Reason Needing Care:
1. Employed 3. Looking for Work
2. School/Job 4. Other
Training

Employment Code: _____

Employment Code, Spouse: _____

Comments on Preferences, Etc.

_____

_____

_____

(Cont. comments below if needed)

_____

Referral Information: Possible Referrals

_____

_____

_____

Call Back Notes w/Date & Initials:

_____

_____

_____

#'s referred: _____

_____

_____

Subsequent Contacts

Date _____ Nature _____

Referrals: _____

_____

Completed: _____

Date _____ Nature _____

Referrals: _____

_____

Completed: _____

Date _____ Nature _____

Referrals: _____

_____

Completed _____

Complete with initials and date _____

Brochure sent: _____

_____

Comments Continued (if needed)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sample Child Care Resource & Referral Service form for enrolling a family day care provider

CHILD CARE SOLUTIONS FAMILY DAY CARE ENROLLMENT FORM

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Name of cross street or closest major intersection: _____

_____ GA Depart. of Human Resources

Telephone No. (_____) _____ Family Day Care Registration

County: _____ No. _____

If you are enrolled in the Save the Children Family Day Care Food Program, please state your provider number: _____

What is the name of the neighborhood you live in? _____

Name of elementary school in your neighborhood: _____

Name of middle school in your neighborhood: _____

Is there a school bus (elementary or middle) that goes directly by your house, please state the school bus number: _____

What public transportation is within walking distance of your home? (If possible state the name and number of bus routes; ex. "9 Toney Valley" or "10 Ansley Park.")

_____

What age children are you willing to serve? Check all that apply.

Under 12 months _____ One year to 3 years _____ Three to 6 years _____

Above six years _____

Are there children under the age of 13 living in your home? Yes _____ No ____
If yes, state age and sex.

Age ____ Sex ___, Age ___ Sex ___, Age ___ Sex ___, Age ___ Sex ___

Do you currently have vacancies? Yes _____ No _____. If yes, for what ages and for how many? _____
Do you keep a waiting list? Yes ____ No ___

Are you willing to enroll children in advance? (for example, an expectant mother needs child care in three months) Yes ____ No _____

(Continued next page)

FEES

Please state fees for age groups and basis on which you charge (hourly, daily, weekly, monthly)

	Full Day Attendance	Part Day Attendance
Under 12 mos.	$_____ Per ____	$_____ Per ____
1 to 3 years	$_____ Per ____	$_____ Per ____
3 to 6 years.	$_____ Per ____	$_____ Per ____
Above 6 yrs	$_____ Per ____	$_____ Per ____

Do you reduce your fees for any reasons (examples: discount for second child in the same family; when child isn't present because of illness or vacations, etc.)? Yes _____ No ____. If yes, please describe: _____

_____

_____

What days of the week are you open? (Check all that apply) M ___ Tu ___ W ___ Th ___ F ___ Sat ___ Sun ___. What hours are you open? From ___ am to ___ pm

Do you accept children for evening care? Yes ____ No ___.

Do you accept children for overnight care? Yes ____ No ___.

Do you accept children on a drop-in basis? Yes ____ No ___.

Do you accept children on a half-day basis? Yes ____ No ___.

Does your home close for legal holidays or to give your family a vacation?

Yes ____ No ___. If yes, when is the home closed? _____

_____

Is your family day care home located in: Single family dwelling ____, Trailer ____ Apartment ____, Other (please describe) _____

_____

Is the outdoor space located in: Fenced yard _____ Unfenced yard _____

Nearby park or playground _____. Other (please describe) _____

Do you have pets in your home? Yes _____ No ___. If yes, state what kind:

_____

(Continued next page)

Do you offer transportation for children in your care? Yes ____ No ____. If yes, describe (example: to and from your home; to or from a school or kindergarten; field trips; to run personal errands, etc.). _____

_____

_____

_____

If you limit the age of children you are willing to transport, or have other car safety practices, please describe.: _____

_____

Do you have references available if parents request them? Yes _____ No _____.

What arrangements are available for the care of the children when you are ill or cannot provide care? _____

_____

_____

Are parents required to furnish any meals? Yes _____ No ____. If yes, please describe: _____

_____

_____

What meals do you serve the children? (Check all that apply): Breakfast _____

Morning snack _____ Lunch _____ Afternoon snack _____ Dinner ____

Does your family day care home receive reimbursement for meals under the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Care Food Program? Yes ____ No ___. If yes, state the name of the organization that sponsors the program: _____

_____

How long have you been caring for children? _____

Do you carry insurance to protect children who may be accidentally injured while in your care? Yes _____ No ____.

Do you carry liability insurance to protect yourself against claims that might arise in connection with the children in your care? Yes _____ No _____.

(Continued next page)

If your were explaining to parents what you do with children in a typical day, what would you tell them? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Does your family day care home offer any special services a parent should know about? (For example, are you willing to care for handicapped children? Will you accept children on special diets? Do you speak a language other than English? do you offer any special educational experiences for children?) Describe: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Is there anything else you would like a prospective parent to know about your family day care home? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Child Care Solutions
Save the Children, Southern States Office
1340 Spring Street, N.W., Suite 200
Atlanta, Georgia 30309

Sample form for enrolling a day care center in the CCR&R

CHILD CARE SOLUTIONS
Sign-Up Form for Day Care Centers and Group Day Care Homes

Name of Center _____ Telephone # _____

Neighborhood _____

Address _____
(Street)

_____ _____.
(City) (Zip)

County _____

Name of cross street or major intersection near center _____

_____

Name and job title of person in charge _____

_____

Are you licensed as a Group Day Care Home? ____ Day Care Center? _____

Department of Human Resources License Number _____

What age children do you care for? (Check all that apply)

Under 12 months _____ 3 - 6 years _____

1 - 3 years _____ Over 6 years _____

What days of the week are your open? (Check all that apply).

Mon____ Tue____ Wed____ Thu____ Fri____ Sat____ Sun____

From _____AM to _____PM.

Do you accept children for (check all that apply):

Evening Care _____ Half-Day Care _____

Overnight Care ___ Part-Time _____

Drop-In Care _____

(Continued next page)

Do you currently have vacancies? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, how many and for what ages? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are there priorities for enrollment ? (e.g., child is low-income or handicapped; child's parents are members of a sponsoring church or work for a sponsoring employer). Yes _____ No _____.
If yes, please explain: _____

_____

_____

Do you provide transportation? (Check all that apply)

To and from school _____ To and from child's home _____

Field trips _____ Other (explain) _____

_____

Describe the transportation service (e.g., large school bus, 12-15 passenger van, etc.; state which schools you drive to: _____

_____

_____

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND DAILY ROUTINES

If you have a brochure or written curriculum that describes philosophy and daily activities, please submit them. If these are not available, please answer the following:

Describe the program's educational philosophy: _____

_____

_____

_____

(Continued next page)

Describe the daily routine and curriculum for each age group of children: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you provide meals and/or snacks? Yes _____ No _____.
If yes, check all that apply:

Breakfast ____, AM Snack ___, Lunch ___, PM Snack ___, Dinner ____.

Describe any special dietary orientation (e.g., natural foods, vegetarian, etc.):

_____

_____

Is there anything else about your program that you would want parents to know? _____

_____

_____

_____

FACILITY DESCRIPTION

Briefly describe your child care facility: Layout, open plan or self-contained classroom, nap facilities, play structure, special equipment, etc.:

Indoor space: _____

_____

_____

_____

Outdoor space: _____

_____

_____

_____

(Continued Next page)

SPECIAL NEEDS/HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

A. Do you take children who are new to this country and do not speak English?

Yes _____ No _____.

B. Please check appropriate categories which describe your enrollment policy:

Cannot enroll handicapped children _____

Accept on individual basis - no special program _____

Accept as percent or total enrollment (_____%)

Receive special funding to serve handicapped children (Specify funding source): _____

C. Please check all categories of special needs served by your program:

Visual handicapped _____

Hearing impaired _____

Orthopedically handicapped _____

Other health impairment: (epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, etc.)

_____

_____

Emotionally disturbed _____

Speech impaired _____

Mentally retarded _____

Multi-handicapped _____

Learning disabled _____

D. If applicable, please describe your program for children with special needs:

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Continued next page)

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Do you offer any summer day camp or other special summer child care programs?

Yes _____ No _____. If yes, please describe:

Ages served: _____

Program hours: _____AM - _____ PM.

Sessions: _____ Location: _____

Program description: _____

_____

_____

_____

FEES (Note: We request information about your fees, but we do not give information about fees to parents.)

Please state fee for age group and the basis on which you charge (hourly, daily, weekly, or monthly).

	FULL-DAY ATTENDANCE	PART-DAY ATTENDANCE
Under 12 mos.	$_____per_____	$_____per_____
1 - 3 years	$_____per_____	$_____per_____
3 - 6 years	$_____per_____	$_____per_____
Over 6 years	$_____per_____	$_____per_____

Do you reduce your fees for any reason? (e.g., discount for second child in the same family, when the child is not present because of illness or vacation, etc.)

Yes _____ No _____. If yes, describe or attach a copy of fee policies:

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Continued next page)

Do you have a method to help low-income families pay for the cost of child care? (for example, a sliding fee scale, a church or community "scholarship" fund, government funds, etc.) Yes ____ No ____. If yes, describe:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please include any additional brochures, policies for parents, or other materials about the center that will help parents and community service agencies understand your center.

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